

Daily Reporter

Founded 1908

Tuesday, November 24, 2009

www.greenfieldreporter.com

G-C reaches across the Atlantic

■ Technology collaboration with a French students will mimic global relationships

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GREENFIELD—A new project in the works at Greenfield-Central High School will give selected students the rare opportunity to collaborate on a technology venture with peers in Europe.

G-C students will work with students in Masevaux, France to create a wireless monitoring device that enables senior citizens to stay in their homes longer. G-C will focus on the engineering aspect of the wireless monitoring device, while the Masevaux students will focus on the installation aspect.

"We hope to utilize existing

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technology. A lot of it is out there," said Mark Holzhausen, a technology education teacher at G-CHS. "We envision bringing the technology together in some small compact device that could be worn by the elderly."

Some business professionals work on projects with their colleagues in other countries. Sensing a business environment that's increasingly global, education leaders in the U.S., Europe and other regions are looking to prepare students through collaborative school projects.

The Indiana Department of Education has a formal exchange agreement with the Academie de Strasbourg (www.acstrasbourg.fr), an educational organization in the Alsace region of eastern France that borders Germany and Switzerland.

Holzhausen expressed interest in the Masevaux project after getting an e-mail from IDOE early this year. He has since been laying the groundwork for the international collaboration.

Last month, he played host to Olivier Leclercq, who teaches electro technology to students in a vocational setting in Masevaux, a program roughly equivalent to an electrician apprenticeship here. Leclercq will supervise the project on the France end.

What sets the Greenfield/Masevaux collaboration apart is the level of technical collaboration that will be involved. Other international projects might involve aspects of language or culture, but this

involves working together to solve a problem that involves technology.

"As far as I know this is the first of its kind," said Michael Fitzgerald, engineering and technology education specialist with the Indiana Department of Education. "Greenfield-Central has just always been a really strong leader in ... (preparing) the kids for the world of tomorrow."

"This is real-world application," added Cathy Blitzer, international education specialist with IDOE. "It is engaging, it is relevant and it's beneficial to the school corporations involved here in Greenfield and in Masevaux, France. This is invaluable experience for them."

Existing monitoring devices for senior citizens require the person to push a button to alert emergency responders, Holzhausen said, but what if someone passes out? The concept for the new device is that it could detect a vital sign change such as a drop in blood pressure and send that signal wirelessly to a computer; the computer could then contact a caregiver or emergency responder.

Students in Greenfield and Masevaux will communicate by e-mail, Skype, audio files and a private intranet system.

Holzhausen is currently recruiting students to take part in the international partnership. He's especially looking for students in the high school's engineering or biomedical academies, and is even encouraging them to take French.

Holzhausen wants to get corporate sponsorships, and is especially interested in companies with ties to France. For more information, call Holzhausen at (317) 462-9211.